

ATHLETIC REVIEW TASKFORCE REPORT

The University of South Dakota

November 6, 2006

Athletics Review Task Force Summary and Recommendations

Background

The University of South Dakota has sponsored inter-collegiate athletics for more than one hundred years. Its initial athletic competition was a football game played against South Dakota State University in 1889. Men's basketball began in 1908. Since the 1920s, USD men's programs have competed in the North Central Conference, which became a recognized NCAA College Division conference in 1950. Women's intercollegiate athletics at the U. has a shorter history, with formal sponsorship of female sports programs less than forty years old. Women's athletic programs competed under the umbrella of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) at the Division I level until 1982, when women's athletic programs were absorbed by the NCAA. Since 1982, both men's and women's intercollegiate athletic teams at USD have competed in the NCC at the DII level. The NCC was known nationally as one of the premier Division II conferences in the nation, and its teams had great success on the national stage. For example, NCC women's basketball teams have claimed nine of the last sixteen national championships, and an NCC team competed in the national championship game for eleven straight seasons. Membership has varied over the years, but the conference has had five consistent members. These are The University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University, the University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, and Augustana College.

In 2002, two charter members of the NCC (NDSU & SDSU) announced their intention to reclassify their athletics programs to Division I and seek new conference affiliation. This past spring, a third charter member (UND) announced its intent to do the same. Other NCC schools are exploring affiliation options, and the conference as a whole is considering mergers with other regional conferences. The face of the NCC is changing and with a majority of charter members having left, the conference has lost the long standing athletic rivalries, which were famous nationwide. In response to this changing athletic landscape, USD President James Abbott appointed the Athletics Review Task Force. At the end of July, the Task Force was constituted (membership list is appended to this report) and charged with reviewing the benefits and drawbacks of USD's current classification and conference affiliation; reviewing financial considerations, competitiveness and institutional issues and "lessons learned" from institutions reclassifying within the past ten years; providing forums for stakeholder feedback; and forwarding the Athletic Review Task Force report including, if the Task Force wishes to do so, a recommendation regarding division classification and conference affiliation by November 6, 2006. USD also retained the services of Inter-Collegiate Athletic Consulting (ICAC) to provide an outside opinion on the reclassification decision and assist with the development of the fiscal model, should the decision to reclassify be made. Although, ICAC has provided a preliminary report of its findings to the Task Force, its complete report, which includes funding models and estimates, was not available to the

Task Force by our deadline. To accomplish our charge, the Athletics Review Task Force was divided into six subcommittees, each charged with examining one of the issues related to the reclassification decision. The charge and composition of these subcommittees may be found in the appendices.

Criteria

At the same time as the task force was beginning its work, USD was finalizing its new strategic plan, *Building an Extraordinary University: 2007-2012*. Building upon the institution's vision "to be the best small, public flagship university in the nation built upon a liberal arts foundation", USD established goals in six strategic areas: academic excellence, research and creative activity, enrollment management, institutional positioning, funding and resource development, and organizational effectiveness and change. Thus, the U is seeking to become a well-positioned University engaged in significant research with expanded graduate programs, while retaining a strong commitment to the liberal arts and its signature undergraduate programs. With the strategic plan as its guide, the Task Force viewed the reclassification decision in the broader context of its contribution to the overall mission of the university and its connection to academics, admissions, student life, and the reputation of the institution.

Consistent with the criteria outlined by ICAC (which may be found in its presentation appended to this report), the Task Force considered the following criteria:

University Academic Goals and Mission	Any change should be consistent with and supportive of the University's academic goals and mission.
Enrollment Management and Student Profile	Any change should have a positive impact on admissions and the overall undergraduate profile.
University Image	Any change should enhance the University's image geographically and among its peer and aspirant institutions.
Intercollegiate Athletic Program Quality and Competitive Level	Any change should result in competitive program quality & competitive level across all sports.
Campus and Student Life	Any change should have a positive impact on student and campus life for both students and student-athletes.
Resources and New Funding	Any change should be based on clear understanding of required resources & real sources of new funding.

A change in classification level, along with a change in athletic affiliation may contribute to several of the goals of the strategic plan. First, we are judged by the company we keep, be it in academic endeavors, in research projects, and in athletic competitions. As we are all aware, the most public of these associations is athletic competitions. Although, scientists in our institution are successfully competing against and cooperating with

researchers at top tier research universities, our sports teams catch the public's attention. Second, our athletic teams, as part of an integrated marketing program, can expand the recruiting territories for the admissions program of the U. The process by which we arrived at our current strategic plan was prefaced by a statement regarding the declining high school population in South Dakota and the need to change our institution, both to recruit a larger share of the South Dakota population and to expand our profile so that we could attract a more diverse group of students to the U. Third, a successful athletic program, which is once again competing against its traditional rivals, can enhance the student life experience. We all remember the electric atmosphere in the DakotaDome when rivals came to town.

Much has changed in the nearly five years since the Athletics Futures Committee recommended that the U's athletic programs remain at the Division II level. However, the core mission of the U has not changed. We still believe in providing our students with a world class education, in faculty who are outstanding teachers and mentors, in research and creative thought, and in providing students with a welcoming environment. A reclassification of our athletic program will not change those core values.

Recommendation

The Athletics Review Task Force recommends that USD pursue NCAA Division I classification for its intercollegiate athletic program, with Division IAA classification for football.

Affiliation Subcommittee Report

Process

The affiliations sub-committee of the Athletic Review Task Force met several times to review conference affiliations at different NCAA classifications levels for The University of South Dakota. The subcommittee also worked with Inter-Collegiate Athletic Consulting (ICAC) to integrate affiliation options with the overall mission of the U.

Considerable time and discussion was devoted to the current options surrounding the North Central Conference (NCC), referring to the current status and future assumptions. The committee also explored other Division II options, including the Northern Sun Conference (NSIC) and the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA).

The subcommittee also reviewed possible affiliation options at the Division I level for all sports except football and the Division I FCS level for football. Several athletic directors and conference officials from Division I BCS conferences and Division I FCS football conferences were contacted.

An overview of the discussions is included below. Additional summary information which compares institutional profiles for several affiliation options is appended to the Task Force Report.

NCC (D-II, all sports)

The membership of the NCC has seen significant change over the past five years. Only one charter member (USD) of the league remains today. In existence since 1922, the foundation of the league for many years had consisted of five schools: The University of South Dakota, the University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, South Dakota State University, and Augustana College. Of the five, three have either left or stated their intentions to leave and both USD and Augustana are reviewing the option of doing the same.

An additional member of the league, the University of Nebraska-Omaha intends to leave the conference for the MIAA. If that occurs, the NCC would fall below the required number of members (6) for conference certification. Thus, the league would cease to exist and the remaining institutions would compete as independents.

The NCC and its commissioner, Roger Thomas, have spent considerable time and resources over the past three years to attract additional members with little success. Today, the likelihood of new members joining under the current standards required by the conference is minimal. The NCC is looking at several options, including altering scholarship limits (decreasing in football) and waiving entrance fees to add members.

ICAC has reviewed the NCC affiliation and identified strengths and issues, included below:

STRENGTHS:

- Historical ties to the old NCC.
- Close proximity of conference schools to USD.

ISSUES:

- With changes in members, NCC no longer has comparable academic institutions to the U.
- Further membership changes will likely result in more non-doctorate-granting institutions.
- Limited geographic presence, doesn't support expansion of admission recruiting boundaries.
- Does not improve student life or the student-athlete experience; no traditional rivalries still in place.
- Does not improve opportunities for new resources and revenues.

Northern Sun (D-II, all sports)

This league consists mainly of Minnesota schools but includes schools in South Dakota and Nebraska, and recently expanded by adding the University of Mary (ND) and Upper Iowa University to bring their membership to ten. They are not actively seeking expansion at this time, but might consider the possibility. The league does have one institution looking at the possibility of reclassification (UM-Crookston), which may alter their membership needs. The Northern Sun does have limitations in regards to scholarship allocation, allowing only 24 in football (36 allowed per NCAA).

ICAC reviewed the Northern Sun affiliation and identified the strengths and issues as:

STRENGTHS:

- No apparent strengths beyond remaining D-II.
- Close proximity of conference schools to USD.

ISSUES:

- Does not include a flagship state institution or a land grant institution.
- None of the members are doctorate-granting institutions.
- Limited geographic presence; doesn't support expansion of admission recruiting boundaries.
- Many institutions have a low number of potential student applications.
- Does not improve student life or the student-athlete experience, no traditional rivalries.
- Competitively ranked lower than the "old" NCC.
- Does not improve opportunities for new resources and revenues.

MIAA (D-II, all sports)

The MIAA is a league comprised mainly of Missouri and Kansas schools and has exhibited a certain amount of instability in conference membership. The conference is considering expansion and has formed a sub-committee to review the possibilities. The

University of Nebraska, Omaha has expressed an interest in joining the conference. The University of South Dakota does not appear to be one of the preferred choices for membership, as we would expand the geographical boundaries of the conference too far to the north. The MIAA does allow the NCAA maximum scholarship allotment for football (36).

Mid-Continent (D-I, no football)

This conference recently expanded membership (2006) to include North Dakota State University, South Dakota State University and IUPU-Fort Wayne. Their recent history would lead one to believe that further conference expansion may be considered in the near future.

ICAC has reviewed the Mid-Continent affiliation and identified strengths and issues, included below:

STRENGTHS:

- The Mid-Con in 2007 will include NDSU and SDSU, and UND is pursuing possible membership.
- If U. were to join, 8 or the 12 members would be doctorate-granting.
- Geographic spread targets some major urban areas.
- Has a presence in Utah, a state in which HS graduation rates are projected to increase by 25% over next 10 years.
- Incorporation of old rivals will enhance student life and student-athlete experience.
- Mid-Con is a nationally competitive and well-respected league.
- Could increase ticket sales and sponsorship opportunities

ISSUES:

- Must seek membership and potential for acceptance is unknown.
- Mid-Con sponsors men's baseball, soccer and tennis which the U. does not sponsor.
- Mid-Con does not sponsor football so the U. would have to find a football conference.
- A number of sports sponsored have only 7 members, thus an NCAA Automatic Qualifier is not insured.
- Does not appear to have an overall conference TV contract; TV and radio contracts appear to be individually negotiated by each member, limits overall visibility.

Missouri Valley (D-I, no football)

The league is not currently interested in expansion. There would be higher costs associated with membership, especially in facilities, salaries and scheduling.

ICAC has reviewed the Missouri Valley affiliation and identified strengths and issues, included below:

STRENGTHS:

- If The U were to join, 5 of the 12 members would be doctorate-granting.
- Geographic spread targets some major urban areas.
- MVC is a nationally competitive and well-respected league.
- Could increase ticket sales and sponsorship opportunities.

ISSUES:

- Must seek membership and potential for acceptance is unknown.
- MVC sponsors men's baseball, soccer and tennis which the U does not sponsor.
- MVC does not sponsor football so the U. would have to find a football conference.
- Even greater financial needs to compete than Mid-Con; highly competitive men's basketball league; would require significant additional resources.

Big Sky (D-I all sports, D-IAA football)

The league is not currently looking at expansion. The geographic footprint is primarily in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific regions, and exists in markets with similar high school demographics as South Dakota. Affiliation with this conference would not assist in the expansion of the recruiting footprint for The U's admissions office.

Gateway (D-IAA football only)

This football conference is administered through the offices of the Missouri Valley Conference. The membership consists of the Missouri Valley institutions that sponsor football, along with Western Illinois and Youngstown State. Western Kentucky announced on November 2, 2006, their intentions to leave the Gateway after the 2006 season.

The league has made overtures to North Dakota State and South Dakota State regarding possible membership. Also, an Athletic Director in the league was recently quoted (11/3/06) as having interest in the University of North Dakota and The University of South Dakota, if they reclassify.

ICAC has reviewed the Gateway affiliation and identified strengths and issues, included below:

STRENGTHS:

- If U and the other Dakota institutions were to join the Gateway, membership would increase to 12, a "correct" number for east/west or north/south divisions in the conference, which is an attractive scheduling option.
- Consistent with the U's academic mission.

- Revival of old NCC rivalries will enhance student life and the student-athlete experience.
- Could increase ticket sales and sponsorship opportunities.
- Regional conference members and would require less travel than Great West

ISSUES:

- Gateway is a subsidiary of the Missouri Valley Conference, a basketball conference.
- The strategies of NDSU, SDSU and UND are important for the success of this football option.
- Enrollment impact geographically could be met through Mid-Con or MVC membership, so football does not extend enrollment management goals.

Great West (D-IAA football only)

The Great West is a recently formed D-IAA football league. Its operation is administered from the Mid-Continent offices and includes Mid-Con members Southern Utah, North Dakota State, South Dakota State, along with Cal Poly and UC-Davis.

Due to only having five members, the league is not eligible for an automatic qualifier in the NCAA D-IAA football playoffs. The teams must qualify as an at-large candidate (Cal Poly qualified in 2005). The league is clearly interested in expansion so that the conference may move toward automatic qualifier status.

ICAC has reviewed the Great West affiliation and identified strengths and issues, included below:

STRENGTHS:

- If the U and UND were to join the Great West revival of old NCC rivalries would occur.
- This football option extends enrollment management goals to West Coast and Utah.
- Old traditional rivalries will enhance student life and the student-athlete experience.
- Could increase ticket sales and sponsorship opportunities.

ISSUES:

- Must seek membership and potential for acceptance is unknown.
- Even with the Dakota institutions, Conference would not meet NCAA AQ requirements.
- Anticipate higher travel costs than Gateway football option.

Classification/Policy Subcommittee Report

The charge of the Classification/Policy Subcommittee is to evaluate the similarities and differences of NCAA regulations and policies in Division I and Division II and assess how these policies may affect The University of South Dakota in the event a decision is made to move to D-1 athletics. The NCAA policies concerning Division I and Division II participation and eligibility are located in the NCAA Bylaws specific to that Division. The majority of the information used to address this information is located in NCAA Bylaw 20 (Membership), Bylaw 15 (Financial Aid) and Bylaw 14 (Eligibility). In addition to NCAA policies, conference affiliation affects policy and compliance regulations; therefore, The University of South Dakota will continue to apply and enforce such policies based on its conference affiliation whether at the NCAA Division II or Division I level.

NCAA Academic Eligibility Requirements

Academic eligibility requirements differ between the two divisions with Division I having more stringent academic eligibility requirements (see tables below). The first table outlines the initial eligibility requirements for Division I and Division II. The second table details the Division I and Division II continuing eligibility requirements.

Academic Eligibility – Initial Eligibility	
DII	DI
14 Core Courses: 3-English 2-Math 2-Science 2-extra in English/Math/Science 2-Social Science 3-Extra in any category above	14 Core Courses: 4-English 2-Math 2-Science 1-extra in English/Math/Science 2-Social Science 3-Extra in any category above
Minimum GPA 2.0 in core courses	Minimum GPA in core courses – best grades used (based on sliding scale)
Combined Score (minimum): ACT 68; SAT 820	ACT/SAT score (based on sliding scale)
	In 2008: 16 Core Courses (3 Math; 4-Extra in any category)

Academic Eligibility – Continuing Eligibility	
DII	DI
Good academic standing (based on institutional and conference requirements)	Good academic standing (based on institutional and conference requirements)
Completion of six hours in previous term of full-time enrollment	Completion of six credits in previous term of full-time enrollment
Per academic year, completion of 24 credits (75% must be earned during regular academic year); or average of 12 per term	Per academic year, 18 semester credits earned during regular academic year
	Before start of third semester, completion of 24 credits

Designation of degree program (for student-athletes beginning third year of enrollment)	Designation of degree program (for student-athletes beginning third year of enrollment)
<u>No</u> percentage of degree requirements	Percentage of degree requirements: 40% entering third year; 60% entering fourth year; 80% entering fifth year
Fulfillment of minimum grade-point average requirements (<i>specific grade-point average standards based on credits earned</i>)	Fulfillment of minimum grade-point average requirements (<i>percentages based on year of collegiate enrollment</i>)

Currently, NCAA *initial eligibility* requirements are similar for Division I and Division II in that each Division requires a minimum of 14 core courses, as well as grade-point average and ACT/SAT score standards. It is important to note that in 2008, Division I requirements will be enhanced to increase the number of high school core courses required by a potential student-athlete to 16 core courses. These higher standards are intended to assist students to be better prepared to handle the challenges of balancing academic studies with athletic participation, and this enhanced initial eligibility requirement is currently being communicated to high school students by the NCAA. In the event that USD reclassifies to Division I, it will also be important for USD coaches to closely evaluate the academic courses and progress of their high school prospects based on this enhanced 16 core course standard. USD will continue to recruit successful student-athletes, and we do not believe that division classification (or reclassification) will significantly change the recruitment and academic success rate of student-athletes based on NCAA initial eligibility requirements.

In regard to *continuing eligibility*, the most significant difference between the Divisions is that Division I has a “percentage of degree” requirement. This requires that a student-athlete achieve 40%/60%/80% of his or her degree requirements when entering the third/fourth/fifth year of college, respectively, in order to be eligible for competition during that academic year. USD already has processes in place to evaluate and certify the eligibility of its student-athletes according to NCAA Division II requirements. If necessary, the academic eligibility processes already in place can be effectively adjusted in order to evaluate and certify student-athletes according to NCAA Division I requirements.

Recommendation #1: If a decision is made to reclassify, the committee will recommend consideration be given to addition of an enhanced academic student-athlete support system and the addition of compliance staff to effectively meet NCAA requirements. In addition, greater participation by institutional units, such as the registrar’s office and academic advising, will be necessary to assist with establishing academic eligibility of student-athletes. Student-athlete support systems may include academic services, personnel, equipment and facilities such as laptop computers and dedicated study areas.

NCAA Financial Aid Requirements

NCAA financial aid requirements vary by Division and can be found in Bylaw 15 and Bylaw 20 of each Division's Bylaws. The table below compares the maximum number of financial aid awards per sport for Divisions I and II.

Financial Aid – Maximum Allowed by Sport (Men)		
Sport	DII	DI
Basketball	10	13
Cross Country/Track & Field	12.6	12.6
Football	36	63
Golf	3.6	4.5
Swimming & Diving	8.1	9.9

Financial Aid – Maximum Allowed by Sport (Women)		
Sport	DII	DI
Basketball	10	15
Cross Country/Track & Field	12.6	18
Golf	5.4	6
Soccer	9.9	14
Softball	7.2	12
Swimming & Diving	8.1	14
Tennis	6	8
Volleyball	8	12

The NCAA also puts minimum financial aid requirements on Division I institutions based on meeting one of four criteria: 1) a percentage of maximum allowable grants, 2) awarding an minimum aggregate expenditure, 3) awarding 50 full grants (at least 25 full grants in women's sports) exclusive of grants awarded in football and men's and women's basketball, or 4) for institutions that depend on exceptional amounts of federal assistance to meet student needs, a minimum of 50% of the required grants cited in the other three criteria. The complete text of this requirement is found in the NCAA Division I Manual, Bylaw 20.9.1.2 and is appended to this report.

NCAA Membership Requirements

Each Division of the NCAA has specific membership requirements regarding the number of sports sponsored and scheduling requirements for those sponsored sports. A comprehensive table comparing the requirements for divisional membership is provided in the appendices. We note that USD already sponsors more sports than the minimum required for Division I participation. If the decision is made to reclassify, conference affiliation will be a high priority in order to allow for scheduling competitions against the required number of Division I opponents for each sport.

NCAA Reclassification Requirements for Change of Division Membership

In the case that the decision is made to reclassify, the NCAA has prescribed set of steps required in each year beginning with an “exploratory year” and progressing through four subsequent years of reclassification. The reclassification requirements are detailed in NCAA Division I Bylaw 20.5, which is appended to this report. The reclassification process is initiated by an institution when it submits a formal application and fee to the NCAA national office by June 1 prior to the exploratory year. An institution may elect not to continue to pursue reclassification at any time during the exploratory year; however, by June 1 at the completion of the exploratory year, an institution must submit to the national office confirmation of its intent to reclassify. In summary, the NCAA Division I reclassification requirements include (1) a timeline for compliance with NCAA Division I rules and requirements, (2) strategic planning documents submitted on an annual basis, (3) required attendance by University administrators at NCAA meetings and educational sessions, and (4) NCAA institutional/compliance certification. If at the conclusion of the reclassification process an institution has sufficiently met all NCAA membership and compliance requirements, the institution may be certified as an *active* member of NCAA Division I.

For example, the following reclassification timeline applies for a Division II institution choosing to begin its exploratory year during the 2007-08 academic year:

Academic Year	Status	Post-season Eligibility
2007-08	Exploratory Year (remain active Division II member)	Eligible for Division II post-season competition
2008-09	First Year of Reclassification	Ineligible for post-season
2009-10	Second Year of Reclassification	Ineligible for post-season
2010-11	Third Year of Reclassification	Ineligible for post-season
2011-12	Fourth Year of Reclassification	Ineligible for post-season
2012-13	Active Division I member	Eligible for Division I post-season competition

Post-Season and Conference Eligibility

As detailed in the table above, an institution reclassifying from Division II to Division I is no longer eligible for *Division II* championships in year one of the membership process and is not eligible for *Division I* championships until it becomes an active Division I member. In regard to eligibility for a Division I *conference's* automatic qualification (AQ) bid to a particular championship, if a reclassifying institution joins an established conference (which already qualifies for an AQ bid) the institution is eligible for an AQ bid once it becomes an active member at the completion of the reclassification process. Other conference-specific rules related to conference championship and post-season qualification may also apply, and would need to be assessed based on a reclassifying institution's intended Division I conference affiliation.

Multidivisional Reclassification

The NCAA permits a reclassifying institution to simultaneously pursue multidivisional status for one men’s and one women’s sport (other than football and basketball) while the remainder of the sports programs continue through the five-year reclassification process. The multidivisional reclassification requirements are detailed in NCAA Bylaw 20.4, which is appended to this report. Pursuing the multidivisional reclassification option allows the student-athletes in the selected sports to become eligible for Division I post-season championships within two years of meeting Division I requirements in those sports. In the timeline outlined in the table above, if multidivisional reclassification was initiated for two sports in preparation for to the 2007-08 academic year, the two selected sports could be eligible for Division I post-season championships after two years (i.e. eligible for NCAA championships in 2009-10).

NCAA Reporting Requirements (APR/GSR)

The NCAA has comprehensive academic reporting requirements designed to improve the academic success and graduation of all student-athletes. In Division I, the key component of academic reporting requirements is an academic measurement for sports teams known as the Academic Progress Rate (APR). According to the NCAA website, “In 2004, the NCAA developed an Academic Progress Rate (APR) metric that examines academic success on a more real-time basis. One point is awarded each term to each scholarship student-athlete who meets academic-eligibility standards and an additional point is awarded if they remain with the institution. A team's APR is the total points earned by the team at a given time divided by the total points possible. A cutoff score of 925 corresponds to an anticipated graduation-rate of about 50%. Teams that fall below the cutoff score on a statistically-significant basis are subject to contemporaneous penalties consisting of a loss of scholarships in that sport. These penalties start after two years of data are collected and normally take effect the following academic year. Teams that habitually fail to meet the cutoff can be subject to historical penalties. Historical penalties may include additional scholarship reductions, recruiting restrictions, lack of access to postseason competition, and restricted membership.” (History of Academic ReformURL=http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/academics_and_athletes/education_and_research/academic_reform/history.html)

In both Division I and Division II, the Graduation Success Rate (GSR) is a graduation-rate methodology calculated for every sport the NCAA regulates, and which supplements rather than replaces the federal methodology. The GSR credits institutions for transfers (both incoming and outgoing) as long as the transfers are academically eligible, and it also accounts for midyear enrollees.

NCAA Reporting Requirements	
DII	DI
GSR – annual tracking and reporting required by Division II institutions	GSR – annual tracking and reporting required by Division I institutions
APR - not required by Division II institutions	APR – annual tracking and reporting required by all Division I institutions

GSR and APR reporting are important components for monitoring student-athlete academic performance for the purposes of academic integrity and accountability. In particular, the APR requires that NCAA institutions are held accountable term by term and year by year for the academic eligibility and retention of student-athletes. Within the already high academic expectations of all USD students and the University's goals for improved student retention rates, the APR can serve as an accountability component of the academic progress of student-athletes if the decision is made to reclassify to Division I.

OTHER KEY NCAA BYLAWS, DISCUSSIONS:

- **Change of Division Membership** – NCAA Bylaw 20.5
- **MultiDivision Classification** – NCAA Bylaw 20.4
- **Academic Progress Rate (APR)** – NCAA Bylaw 23
- **Division I Athletics Certification (End of Year 3 into Year 4)** – NCAA Bylaw 22

The complete NCAA Division Manuals may be found at the following locations

http://www.ncaa.org/library/membership/division_i_manual/2006-07/2006-07_d1_manual.pdf

http://www.ncaa.org/library/membership/division_ii_manual/2006-07/2006-07_d2_manual.pdf

Constituencies Subcommittee Report

Process

The constituencies subcommittee was asked to develop methods/mediums for constituency feedback as it relates to the level of NCAA classification. These methods could include surveys, open forums, electronic interactions, or other appropriate tools. These methods will gauge general interest levels and attitudes toward the classification of USD's athletic programs. However, in addition to collecting feedback, the subcommittee also felt that it was important to educate the various constituency groups on the issues facing our institution and the Athletics Review Task Force, as we examined the current and future state of the U's athletic program.

Task Force members worked with athletic department staff to develop a Q&A/Fact Sheet on the classification issues facing the institution. The questions chosen to be included and answered in the Fact Sheet were based on the content of informal conversations, emails, and newspaper editorials, which occurred or appeared early in the review process. These questions touched on athletic, academic, and financial issues related to a reclassification decision. This document was distributed to faculty, staff, and students at USD, and is available on the athletic department web site. We are hopeful this document was a useful educational tool. A copy is appended to the Task Force report.

Throughout the semester, members of the constituencies subcommittee met with various groups to provide updates and collect feedback. A monthly report was made to the faculty senate regarding the progress of the review and senators were encouraged to provide feedback regarding their concerns. Some responded to the offer and their concerns, along with those collected from others, will be summarized later in the report. The Dakota Days weekend also provided an opportunity to inform various groups about the process and collect feedback. During this weekend, members of the Task Force met formally with the Foundation Trustees and the Alumni Association Board of Directors. Finally, three town meetings were held across the state at the end of October to provide open forums for Inter-Collegiate Athletic Consulting to provide its preliminary recommendations to the public and answer questions regarding those recommendations.

Concerns of Constituents

Without a doubt, the most significant concern expressed by all constituency groups was the uncertainty in the funding model to reclassify to Division I. Faculty on campus are concerned that already scarce resources may be further diverted from educational needs to help fund a reclassification move. Students are fearful that student fees may be increased without their approval. Alums and other supporters are concerned that a fundraising model has not yet been developed, and about the feasibility of raising the additional dollars solely through additional revenues and contributions.

Coaches, athletes, athletic department staff and USD fans are concerned with conference affiliation. (Clearly, this will be an issue regardless of any reclassification decision). Having watched other schools struggle with scheduling and budgeting issues in the absence of a conference, our supporters do not want the U to suffer the same fate.

Other concerns involved the ability of the U's athletic teams to be competitive at the Division I level, a possible lowering of academic standards with the move to Division I, a reduction in opportunities for in-state athletes to compete in intercollegiate athletics, and will our program be able to compete at a level that will attract quality student-athletes to our campus.

Responses of Constituents

Most constituents recognize the fact that the U's conference affiliation must change. Some are excited about the move to Division I and the possible opportunity to renew traditional rivalries. Some would like to remain at Division II in order to provide ongoing opportunities for "local" athletes to participate in intercollegiate athletics. However, this subcommittee feels that most opposition to a reclassification move would drop precipitously, when a sound financial model for making this move is developed.

Summary of Town Meeting Questions

The bullet items below summarize the questions from participants at the town meetings.

Funding

- Am I correct that you can't use student fees in paying for the move to Division I? Where will the money come from – tickets sales?
- Question about Title IX and Scholarships... Can we meet the criteria of gender equity with the Board of Regents requirement of all three prongs? Can we add enough women's scholarships to balance the need for 27 new football scholarships? Will we lose fans? Is there some way to get Regents to modify their stance on the title IX prongs to allow for more student fee dollars to help pay for the cost?
- Following up on the scholarship numbers, the Athletic Board of Control (ABC) was told that the conference affiliation would be resource driven. How do we square on the money needed (suggesting that the cost would be \$3.3 million and not \$1.9 million based on the average D-I budget)?
- Should USD consider putting all of its resources behind one sport (i.e., basketball) and try to be competitive at the national level in that sport?
- How will the additional funds be phased in?
- How does the out-of-state tuition rate affect the cost as we broaden our recruiting base?
- What type of a fundraising model is in place to raise the additional dollars?
- Support for Higher Education from state funds in South Dakota is limited. Where will we find the additional dollars?
- Does the investigation into the tax exempt status of the NCAA affect possible tax deductions for donors wishing to contribute to an institution's athletic programs?

Affiliation

- Why not join the Gateway Conference in football and not Great West? Gateway Conference gets automatic bid, right?
- Isn't SDSU being looked at by the Gateway Conference?
- How much of an impact will moving to Division I have in terms of the Midcon requiring USD to add men's sports – such as men's tennis, baseball, etc?

- If SDSU had so much trouble getting into a conference, then why is it we would have more success? Can we believe it will happen?
- Why can't all sports be in the same conference? Why does football need a separate conference?

Academics

- Won't USD be asking its student-athletes to do more travel and have less academic exposure due to a move such as this? Is that type of academic problem worth it for the student athletes?

General

- Aren't we moving too fast? It is disarming that there are uncertainties and assumptions in this decision that aren't fully dealt with?
- In your consulting have you recommended anybody to go up and down? If so how did you handle the announcement? Did you do a public forum like this before making a full presentation to the president and/or task force?
- If USD moves to D-I shortly, how far behind UND will the University be?
- If we add 27 scholarships in football and add 31 scholarships for female sports, where will they go? Can you add 31 scholarships to the female sports without adding a sport?
- What will your commitment to the coaches be? Will they continue to teach or freed up to allow for more recruiting, etc.?
- How much of your study will look at facilities?
- Shouldn't the University make necessary changes (facilities, program funding) before attempting this move?
- Will we be competitive at this new level?

Most of these were adequately answered by ICAC or representatives of the Athletics Review Task Force present at the meetings. The revenue questions will be explored in more detail as ICAC finalizes its report for the U. The divisional reclassification model of the NCAA typically requires an institution to declare its intent to reclassify. The institution then spends an exploratory year validating the feasibility of its financial and revenue generating models.

Facilities Subcommittee Report

The Facilities subcommittee was charged with the task to “provide an overview and assessment of the status of USD’s athletic facilities, which should include practice and competition facilities for both current and anticipated sports, and administrative facilities such as offices for coaches and other support staff. These facilities should be compared to those at peer and aspirational institutions in both D-II and D-I/DI-AA.” Since the athletic facilities at USD also serve recreational needs and academic program needs, the subcommittee expanded its charge to include the athletic/recreation facilities at The University of South Dakota with respect to University’s academic, recreation and intercollegiate athletic needs.

Facilities Overview

The University of South Dakota’s DakotaDome is a 145,000 square-foot multi-use facility featuring an indoor football field, five basketball courts, an eight-lane 200 meter track, racquetball, volleyball and tennis courts and a weight room. The DakotaDome and its staff provide a wide range of facility services for the University and the Community. The DakotaDome is the home of Coyote Athletics and the University’s Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. The DakotaDome also serves the recreation needs for students, faculty and staff at the University as well as recreation needs of the community. The Dome houses a wide variety of intramural events, aerobic classes and other special events including an annual farm show in January. The Dome serves the South Dakota High School Activities Association in November as host to the high school football playoff finals for all football classes. Area high schools and regional colleges will use the DakotaDome for fall football games during inclement weather. Vermillion High School plays all of its varsity home football games in the DakotaDome. In addition to athletic events, the DakotaDome hosts the annual QuadStates Marching Band Competition which brings schools from South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota.

The DakotaDome was constructed in 1979 at a cost of \$7.9 million with an air-inflated Teflon roof. In 2001-02, major renovation of the DakotaDome took place including replacement of the Teflon roof with a permanent roof at a cost of \$13.7 million. The renovation included replacement of scoreboards and updating the facility. Annually, in excess of 450,000 people attend events housed in the DakotaDome.

Other athletic and recreational facilities in addition to the DakotaDome include a softball complex, soccer complex, outdoor tennis courts, outdoor football practice fields, and the Don Baker Memorial Course cross country course. Total Land Area = 128 acres.

This subcommittee has reviewed the facilities at USD to determine how effectively these facilities meet the academic, recreational, and intercollegiate athletics needs of the University for various options of NCAA affiliation including Division II and Division I. The committee asked USD coaches to assess local facilities with respect to a) training and practice, b) hosting competitive events, c) locker rooms, d) weight training, and e) athletic training facilities. Their assessments were categorized with respect to 1) current

status of the facilities, 2) comparison of their sport's facilities to top tier Division II facilities and 3) comparison of their facilities to Division I facilities for institutions of similar size and resources. A summary of their assessment of facilities is appended to this report. We have also compared our facilities for the two major revenue generating sports, basketball (men and women's) and football with various institutions who compare similarly with USD and who are either presently Division I, recently moved to Division I, or who have announced a move to Division I. (See appended materials entitled **Facilities Assessment by USD Coaches** and **Facilities Comparison**).

Subcommittee Recommendations

The committee is in agreement on the following recommendations regarding recreation and athletic facilities at the University of South Dakota:

Recommendation #1: Regardless of the University's decision to remain at Division II or move up to Division I, a separate facility is needed to meet the recreation needs of student, faculty, staff and community and the intramural sports program. The sharing of the DakotaDome for athletics and recreation prevents either from fully achieving their respective goals. The athletic teams and the recreational users suffer from having to share the DakotaDome in terms of availability and in terms of seasonal configuration of the Dome (i.e., football vs. basketball). A plan for a new recreation facility, which utilizes the Continuing Education building (now serving as the temporary student center), is in preliminary planning stage. The plan calls for a multi-phase project whereby the building is remodeled and expanded. Discussions of a recreation facility that is shared between the University and the city of Vermillion are ongoing. Preliminary plans for the facility are appended to this report entitled **Recreational/Wellness Facility Planning Process**. The facility would not be used for training or competition for intercollegiate athletics with the possible exception of Men's and Women's Diving and Swimming in the event an aquatics phase is included. The pool housed in the DakotaDome is 25 yards in length. Swimming meets producing times that can be used for national meet qualification requires pools measuring 25 meters in length. The aquatic phase of the recreation facility should include a 50 meter pool with a moveable bulkhead for both recreational use and competitive meets. A moveable bulkhead can provide a practice (warmup) pool along with a competitive pool for swimming meets. In addition, a portion of the pool can remain devoted to lap swimming for exercise and recreation and provide a second pool for recreation and water aerobics. Finally, creation of a recreation facility would provide for separate weight training facilities for athletes and for the University Community, a need that is consistently addressed by the coaches in their facility assessments.

Recommendation #2: *The subcommittee is in agreement with the outside consulting firm, Inter-Collegiate Athletic Consulting, and its assessment that the University of South Dakota's athletic teams can compete at the Division I level with existing facilities. This is further demonstrated by the comparison of USD with other schools and their facilities for the revenue generating sports found in the appendix. The DakotaDome provides a venue which has the spectator capacity and overall facility amenities which is*

competitive for both Division II and schools in Division I that compare similarly to USD in size and mission. However, specific facilities needs exist that must be addressed in the near future in order to ensure that all sports are provided the support needed to succeed. These are identified in the table found in appended materials entitled **Facilities Assessment by USD Coaches**. The committee has not prioritized the needs. Such decisions need to be made by the athletic department along with USD upper administration. However, certain needs that are obvious and must be addressed are summarized as follows:

- a) Locker room / training room remodeling/improvements in the DakotaDome. **Long Term:** separate addition to the DakotaDome which includes locker rooms and training facilities.
- b) Soccer field for competitive events must be added.
- c) Volleyball, a sport whose time overlaps with Football, has significant facility needs to be competitive.
- d) Despite the excellent indoor track provided by the DakotaDome, USD Track and Field cannot host outdoor meets. An outdoor track is needed. USD Track and Field have put together a brochure with a plan for an outdoor track and field facility with accommodations for spectators. In the middle of the track, a soccer field for competitive soccer events would be located. They are using the brochure to raise funds for construction of this three phase project. Completion of the project would not only benefit the track and field program, but would also address the glaring needs for women's soccer. The brochure can be found in appended materials entitled **USD Track and Field and Soccer Facility Brochure**.
- e) Permanent outfield fence for main field, improved dugouts and bullpen for main softball field for competitive games.
- f) **Long term** facility improvements/additions should include a basketball and volleyball fieldhouse, in addition to the DakotaDome.

Again, these improvements/additions need to be considered regardless of a change in NCAA classification.

Recommendation #3: The facilities subcommittee recommends that expenditures for facility improvement/additions should not be considered solely as expenses but rather investments. Improving athletic and recreation facilities will not only benefit intercollegiate athletics but should be viewed as an investment with many potential beneficial returns including financial returns:

- a) Recreation facilities help recruit and retain students...improve student life.
- b) Athletic facilities increase the competitive level of the athletic teams and bring the University and its constituencies together through support of these teams. Creates a spirit of community.
- c) By separating athletic and recreational facilities, an increase in opportunities for use of athletic facilities by other organizations such as the SD High School Activities Association can occur since such arrangements will not hamper student recreation access. Use of USD

facilities by high schools provides a tremendous recruiting opportunity for the University.

- d) Improvement of athletic facilities increases the opportunities for summer youth sport camps which bring revenue to the University and the City of Vermillion.

A strong connection exists between facilities and potential new revenue streams for the University and the community. A dynamic and synergistic relationship exists between facilities and general student recruitment to the University and facilities can play a key role toward increasing awareness of the University throughout the region.

Fiscal/Personnel Subcommittee Report

The charge to the Fiscal/Personnel subcommittee was to “provide a detailed analysis, with clearly defined assumptions and targets, which addressed the fiscal position of the athletic department as it relates to funding a D-II and a D-I/DI FCS program. Once the anticipated expenses are defined and a revenue plan developed, evidence will also be needed to demonstrate the probability that the projected revenue is attainable. Provide a detailed analysis of personnel needs as they apply to D-II or a move to D-I/DI FCS. This analysis may consider number of staff, compensation, contract length, etc”

With the hiring of Inter-Collegiate Athletics Consulting to provide an outside and unbiased review for the process, much of the task of this subcommittee was shifted to ICAC. A complete financial plan must be built around certain assumptions, such as conference affiliation, sports sponsorship, competitiveness of athletic teams, and success of student-athletes. Although a complete financial plan is not yet in place, ICAC has indicated that USD’s athletic program budget must increase by \$1.9 million in 2007 dollars in order to fund a successful move to Division I/FCS. Of that amount, approximately one third will increase the number of scholarships for student-athletes, one third will fund increased operational costs, and one third will go toward staffing costs. As part of its final report, ICAC has been contracted to develop a complete fiscal plan, should USD decide to reclassify.

Fortunately, the entire bulk of this increase is not required immediately. As the NCAA timeline below shows, an institution has a fairly lengthy time interval between announcing its intent to reclassify to Division I/I FCS and becoming a full member of this division.

Timeline (as it would apply to USD)

1. June 1, 2007: Letter to NCAA stating intention to reclassify.
2. Academic Year 2007-2008: Remain a member of NCC and Division II, eligible for DII championships, and exploratory year for Division I/I FCS.
3. June 1, 2008: Confirmation of intent to reclassify.
4. Academic Year 2012-2013: Full member of Division I/I FCS.

The upcoming academic year would provide USD and its supporters time to develop the business plan around the assumptions we pick for our participation in Division I/I FCS. This transition period also provides time to build the financial foundation to support such a reclassification.

Budgeting would increase each year, building up scholarships, staffing and operations, until reaching the fifth year of transition. At that time, the budgeting should reflect the predicted amount (\$1.9M) adjusted for inflation and presented in current year dollars.

Predicted Budget Timeline

FY '07: Current year, estimated budget of \$5.2M.

FY '08: Division II, NCC, estimated budget \$5.9M (\$200,000 non-related to DI move)

FY '09: First year, Division I

FY '13: Division I, full member, estimated budget of \$7.1M plus inflation and current dollars recalculation.

We should note that remaining at the DII level does not necessarily guarantee that costs will remain at current levels. As the affiliation section of the report indicates, conference affiliation may be an issue even if USD chooses to remain at the DII level. If USD loses the benefit of a conference, budgeting becomes more unpredictable and costs for a successful DII program could increase.

Current South Dakota Board of Regents (SD BOR) policy prohibits an institution from funding an athletic reclassification from university/state funds or through increasing student fees. This policy “protects” the monies available for use by various departments on campus, including the academic and teaching units. Thus, funds to support this move would have to come from increased fundraising efforts, increased revenues, or other athletic related methods. Also, independent of athletic classification, the fundraising model for athletics (both staffing and reporting) will need to be reviewed and changed to optimize solicitation and procurement of gifts.

Support Units Subcommittee Report

Current Academic Support

The University of South Dakota seeks to provide all of its undergraduate students with support programs designed to allow students to have the best possible academic undergraduate experience. Many of these programs have been developed recently and reflect our institution's commitment to improving measures of students' success such as retention and graduation rates. Support programs available to all students include centralized academic advising, the University Writing Center, Supplemental Instruction, the Math Help Lab, and summer Academic Orientation.

As a result of the recommendations brought forth by the Academic Advising Task Force, the Academic Advising Center at USD has been restructured to be more responsive to the needs of students during their first two years at the U. The new model reflects a more centralized approach to academic advising with professional advisors assisting students with the task of fulfilling general education requirements, thereby allowing advisors in the major discipline to act more as mentors rather than having to assist students with the mundane task of choosing which general education course to select. All professional advisors are trained in the broad academic requirements affecting all students, with each professional advisor serving as a liaison with specific academic departments. Thus, each student receives a general advisor, whose sole responsibility is to maintain current knowledge of the institution's graduation requirements and who will work with individual students to develop a plan of study. The role of the discipline specific advisor shifts from one of assisting students with course selection (although this may still occur) to an expanded role of mentoring students with respect to academic and career goals.

The USD Writing Center assists student writers enrolled in courses at The University of South Dakota in developing their writing skills. By working with individualized writing consultants, students are assisted with all parts of the writing process. Although individual papers are improved by working with the writing consultants on a one-on-one basis, the stated goal of the writing center is to make students better writers. The Writing Center is open five days per week, Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In addition to providing writing consultant services, the Writing Center also holds weekly workshops designed to help students with various facets of the writing process from grammar and punctuation to academic integrity. These workshops are held on Wednesday evenings throughout the semester.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a program developed by the academic advising center to improve student performance in general education courses and other required courses that are frequently considered difficult by students. SI sessions are based on a peer-assisted model of instruction, through which students, who have completed the course in previous years, serve as study session leaders. These study sessions provide a means for students to work together to solve problems, discuss course concepts, prepare for exams, and become better students. Typically, three hours of supplemental instruction are held per week and are scheduled, based on student input, during free times in a majority of the students' schedules.

The Math Help Lab is sponsored by the Mathematics Department and provides tutoring assistance to students enrolled in all math courses at USD. The Math Help Lab is open five days per week, Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The Mathematics department is also incorporating MATH XL, an online homework assistance program, into its introductory math courses to provide students with more immediate feedback regarding the success of their problem solving approach.

In addition to the programs available to the student body as a whole, the Athletics Department has instituted additional programs to provide academic assistance to student-athletes. The first is an Athletic Study Center that is housed in ID Weeks Library and is open thirty-five hours per week; Mon – Thurs, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and Sunday from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. These hours are chosen to accommodate student-athlete practice and competition schedules. Those student-athletes, who are required to participate in this program, are expected to be at the Study Center a minimum of 6 hours per week. Study Center is required for almost all first-year student-athletes and student-athletes whose cumulative GPA falls below a 2.5.

Tutors are available to student athletes as part of the Study Center. In the fall of 2006, sixteen subject areas were covered by tutors, with plans to add tutors in two or three new subject areas. English and Mathematics tutors are available every day the Study Center is open. Other areas develop schedules that are less frequent. Student-athletes are encouraged to attend Supplemental Instruction, and the hours spent at Supplemental Instruction sessions count toward their weekly obligation of hours at Study Center.

Secondly, as part of the restructuring of the Academic Advising Center, a full time advisor has been assigned to student-athletes. It should be noted that this individual reports to the Provost through Academic Advising, and is not part of the athletic department staff. This advisor serves as the primary academic advisor for all undecided student-athletes and as a secondary academic advisor for all other student-athletes. Student-athletes, who are considering adding or dropping a course, are asked to obtain prior approval from this academic advisor. The advisor also monitors classroom performance and classroom attendance by contacting professors with student-athletes enrolled in their classes and asking for a performance update. Coaches are notified of any faculty concerns regarding their specific student-athletes. The academic advisor also teaches an optional, one-credit Academic Orientation class for student-athletes each semester.

A problem that plagues many student-athletes is missed class time due to travel to competitions. Several years ago, the University Senate approved a resolution which allows students who miss class for university sponsored events the opportunity to make up missed work. The resolution reads *“When necessary, make-up of course requirements missed because of student participation in University sanctioned events and activities shall be worked out between the instructor and the student upon the student's initiative.*

Instructors are required to allow for such make-up in a timely manner when a student is absent because of participation in events approved by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. For a University related event, a student must contact his/her instructor at least two days prior to the absence and provide documentation from the sponsoring unit indicating the dates that the student will be absent from class. To the extent possible, students should notify the instructor during the first week of the semester of possible missed dates. An instructor may have special attendance/requirement policies for particular classes, whenever those policies are not in conflict with the student's right to make up missed requirements as described above.” Thus, providing that students act in a responsible manner, participation in athletic competitions cannot arbitrarily lower a student’s grade.

Student-Athlete Input

As part of this process, members of the Support Units Subcommittee met with the Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) to receive feedback on the academic support programs available at USD and to determine if there were additional needs that could be met. Their comments are summarized in bullet points below.

- Peer-based advising within the athletic department to supplement the professional advising already occurring.
- Study Center credit for coach-mandated study time on road trips. Some student-athletes mentioned the fact that when they are in a travel intensive part of the season, getting the six hours of study center time fulfilled while they are actually on campus is difficult.
- Expanded hours for the Study Center: to begin earlier in the morning and perhaps earlier on Sunday afternoon.
- More regularized policy for making up missed exams, including having academic proctors available for Sunday make-up exams.
- Additional help with navigating the online resources of campus including WebCT, Web Advisor, and other electronic resources.
- Some flexibility in the scheduling of IdEA foundation and capstone courses, so that sections of these courses are scheduled at times that do not conflict with practice and competition times and some flexibility in meeting the service obligations of the IdEA program, particularly during competition seasons.
- The opportunity for early registration each semester to provide greater flexibility in enrolling in sections that would not conflict with practice times.
- Sensitivity to practice times by the academic side of campus, so that not all sections of a particular course are scheduled during afternoon time slots.
- Flexibility with financial aid to provide greater opportunities for exchange and study abroad opportunities during non-competition semesters.

Academic Concerns

While the current level of academic support provided to student-athletes is sufficient and serves the student-athletes reasonably well, many of the concerns expressed by the student-athletes are valid and could be addressed with few, if any, additional resources.

However, if the proposed move to Division I athletics occurs, the number of intercollegiate athletes at USD will increase and may provide an additional strain on current academic support resources. The following recommendations should be considered:

Recommendation #1: In cooperation with the Academic Advising Center, a second professional academic advisor should be assigned to serve the needs of student-athletes should the number of student-athletes increase, as expected in a reclassification decision.

Recommendation #2: Expand the Study Center hours, find additional tutors in Math and English to serve a larger group of student-athletes, and encourage more student-athletes to visit the Writing Center and the Math Help Lab as a supplement to Study Center hours.

Recommendation #3: With the assistance of the Office of Academic Affairs, the Registrar's office, and the Athletic Board of Control, develop an early registration model for student-athletes and communicate scheduling issues to academic departments to alleviate, when possible, the scheduling problems encountered by student-athletes.

Recommendation #4: Identify a resource person on campus, who could provide an hour-long workshop course to educate student-athletes on the use of the electronic resources required of all students. (This could serve as a model for a larger campus program to help the entire student body).

Athletic Support

The task force considers the following to fall under the category of athletic support: competition and practice facilities, training and treatment facilities, and athletic personnel excluding coaches. The facilities components are addressed in a separate section of the task force report, although we reiterate here the necessity for additional recreational facilities on the USD campus, for the benefit of the general student population as well as student-athletes.

The USD student-athletes interviewed by the subcommittee members focused primarily on academic support issues, but several athletic support issues were brought forward.

- Student-athletes expressed a desire to have a full-time strength and conditioning coach, who would develop off-season and in-season strength and conditioning programs specific to each sponsored sport.
- Student-athletes expressed a need to have access to a nutritionist, who could help them develop menus compatible with a high level of athletic performance. These same students expressed frustration with available on-campus meal options with respect to both quantity and price. (We note that this frustration is caused in part by the ongoing construction of a new student center and this issue should be alleviated in future years).

- Student-athletes expressed a desire for an optional course in financial planning and loan management. This course is one that would be beneficial to most undergraduate students at the U.

Recommendation #5: Hire a strength and conditioning coach for all intercollegiate student-athletes. This is independent of any classification decision and is a process that has already begun within the athletic program.

Recommendation #6: Work with the local health care community to obtain the services of a nutritionist, on a part-time basis, to assist student-athletes in the process of developing and maintaining healthy diets.

Recommendation #7: Increase staff in the Athletic Training program so that the University's athletic program is within the Recommendations and Guidelines for Appropriate Medical Coverage of Intercollegiate Athletics proposed by the National Association of Athletic Trainers. (This particular recommendation may also be addressed in the fiscal/personnel section of the task force report).

Recommendation #8: Fully implement institutional participation in the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program (Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success) sponsored by the NCAA. This program was initiated to improve the quality of life for student athletes on campus. This program's goals are to *"promote student-athletes' ownership of their academic, athletic, career, personal and community responsibilities; to meet the changing needs of student-athletes; to promote respect for diversity and inclusion among student-athletes; to assist student-athletes in identifying and applying transferable skills; to enhance partnerships between the NCAA, member institutions and their communities for the purpose of education; to foster an environment that encourages student-athletes to effectively access campus resources; and to encourage the development of character, integrity and leadership skills."* Since its inception in 1991, more and more institutions nationwide have joined, with 130 in Division II, 106 in Division I FCS, and 128 in Division I BCS. The cost associated with joining is minimal; however, commitment to the program from participating institutions and conference offices is required.